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INTERVIEWEE: Sister Inez Hernandez

SUBJECT:

INTERVIEWER: Ann Gohl, SJHM Volunteer

TRANSCRIBER: Evelyn Cannon, SJHM Volunteer

Sister Inez Hernandez currently resides at St. John Vianney Convent at 4600 Highland Avenue, San Jose. This is Side 1 of 3 Sides, 2 Tapes. Cassette 2 was recorded on March 16, 1992 at the apartment of Ann Gohl at 1655 South Winchester, Campbell, California.

Introduction by Ann Gohl: I'm recording Sister Inez Hernandez in her Convent, St. John Vianney. This is February 14, 1992.

SI=Sister Inez

AG=Ann Gohl

AG First of all, Sister, can you tell me when and where you were born?

SI I was born in Mexico in the State of Nayarit, actually in the Capitol of the State, Tepic. This state is on the West Coast of Mexico and about the central part facing the Pacific. I was born on December 1, 1910, the oldest child of my parents who eventually had 10 children. Of the 10 children, one died in infancy, about a year and a

half; the others all reached adulthood. I am the only one who is a religious and I entered religious life in San Francisco after my graduation from high school.

AG Your father was a carpenter in Mexico, right?

SI My father was a cabinetmaker and carpenter in Mexico. At the time that I remember going to school, he was very dissatisfied, the way I see it now, with politics because at that time it was the revolution in Mexico. However, our city, Tepic, was not so much involved in the fighting because it was surrounded by mountains and it was not as easy to get to other states. So we were relieved from much of the fighting, but the politics did penetrate and I think that's the reason why my father decided to leave and go to a freer area and that would be the United States.

AG And when was that?

SI My father arranged to leave Mexico in 1920. We left in the summer of 1920. We stopped briefly to visit one of my uncles on the way, which was in Santiago in the same state, and then we came North. At that time there were no planes, no airlines, so we travelled by train and we came through the border and I remember that those of us

who could read and write, which were three of us, were asked to sign our names at the Immigration Office as we passed through. We were then five children; one had died so it would have been six, but the five children eventually came with my father and mother and we stopped briefly in Phoenix, Arizona, and then in Los Angeles, but only briefly because it was not my father's goal to stay in any of these places. His goal was San Francisco where he had some very good friends who had encouraged him to come North.

AG So he knew about San Francisco? He knew what kind of city it was and what kind of possibilities. Would he work with them, with the people that he knew or would he be an independent cabinetmaker here?

SI They were only friends. They happened to have a little restaurant on Broadway Street in San Francisco so they immediately took care of us. They made sure that we had a place to stay, and at first we lived in a flat, a home on Green Street, just a few weeks. And then we found a place, a house on Russian Hill only about a half a block away from Our Lady of Guadalupe Church on Broadway. From there my mother found out that there were two schools nearby, both equally distant, about two blocks away. One was Jean Parker School, which was the public school, and

the other was St. Francis School, which was a private school run by sisters and it was run by The Sisters of The Presentation of which I am now a member. And three of us who had already been to school were enrolled by my mother at St. Francis School, and that would have been my sister Josephine, my brother Frank and myself.

AG Were there a lot of people from Mexico in that area? Would that be why your father chose that area to live in? Did you find discrimination is what I'm getting at?

SI That's an interesting question because fortunately we began living in an area that was multicultural. There were in the blocks where we lived Italian, French, German, Spanish and Mexican people and we would get together, the children that is, get together and our common denominator for playing, of course, was English. Since some of us could not communicate with the same language, we turned to English for our games and that was marvelous because that social contact that way and our being in school made it easy for us to learn the language and within one year the three of us were bilingual.

AG Terrific. Now did all those children who played this way go to St. Francis?

SI No.

AG I see, they went to different schools.

SI Only two of those with whom we played went to St. Francis. The others were all public school children.

AG Did those friendships last all through your childhood?

SI Yes, yes they have. We don't see each other very often, those who have survived, but we do still keep in touch.

AG I understand that in Mexico you make your First Communion much later. Did you make it here?

SI I made my First Communion before we left Mexico. My mother made sure that three of us made our First Communion before leaving so that we wouldn't have difficulties up here. So we made our First Communion and that way we didn't have to worry about our sacraments.

AG You've answered so many wonderful questions here so you answered all these down here. You apparently came in connection with the sisters in elementary school. In high school did you also have them?

SI Yes. After I finished elementary school up to the eighth grade and graduated from St. Francis, I went to one of our schools, Presentation High School in San Francisco, which was situated on Masonic Avenue and Turk. And at that time the school was part of the large building which was the convent, and the house was surrounded by cemeteries. No longer of course, it's a busy area now, commercial as well as residence, but at that time it was surrounded by cemeteries. The sisters had bought property in an area where there were no buildings yet and they had built their convent there in 1912. So the cemeteries surrounding us were the Odd Fellows, the Masonic Cemetery and about two blocks away the Laurel Cemetery, where we find Lone Mountain, which used to be the San Francisco College for Women run by the religious of the Sacred Heart. They built on a hill that was Calgary Hill that was part of a cemetery and that's why it's up on a hill. It is not part of the University of San Francisco, but that was empty area when I was in the novitiate training for religious life.

AG How did your family react to your wanting to be a sister? Were they happy about it or were there reservations?

SI My father was a little doubtful. My mother was very happy about it. My father didn't know much about

religious life here in the United States and actually he knew very little of it in the city where we had been living, Tepic, because there were few convents there. In fact, just thinking back, that's the reason why we did not attend the Catholic School in the city where I was born, in Tepic, because there was no Catholic School there. And the interesting thing was that my father enrolled two of us, my sister Josephine and myself were close in age, in school together and he enrolled us in a public school. Whatever happened, I remember coming home and telling about our doings at school and so on and, as I said, whatever happened at one point my father took both of us out of the school. We don't know why, but he took us out of school and he decided that that education was not for us. I have an idea that it had something to do with politics; I'm not sure, I wish I had asked my father, I never did. But what he did was he contracted with the public school teacher who lived around the corner, in the same block where we lived, and she would give us classes after school and on Saturdays. So she became our tutor and that's how we got our education, by tutoring.

AG Oh, you must have been well educated.

SI Oh yes. She was very good and my sister Josephine and I

vied with each other as to who could do better, so it was good for us. Then on the way up, as I said, we visited an uncle in Santiago and there, because it was the time when there were schools still in session -- in fact, it was a little school that we lived near to for a while while we were visiting our uncle, and my father did not want us to be with nothing to do, so he enrolled us in this little school. It was like a little rural school; there were about three or four teachers and each one had two grades. And I liked it there, it was very quiet and it was very family-like, so we did some of our work there. When we came up to the United States, I know from looking back that I was ready for the fourth grade and my sister was with me so we were both doing the same type of work. My brother Frank had already been in first grade, finished it, so the three of us were reading and writing and that was our background.

AG And so did they put you in fourth grade?

SI That's an interesting question. When my mother went to this St. Francis School to enroll us in classes in San Francisco, this principal there -- the sister who was the principal -- didn't know exactly where to place us because we spoke no English, nothing at all. So she sent an eighth grade girl I remember well to another classroom

and the girl went to the classroom and brought back a reader. I recognized that later on as a reader. So Sister opened the book and offered it to me first and pointed. Of course all those signs were body language meaning read. So I looked at the book and I looked at the title page and the story and I said to myself, "I'm not going to read the title, but I am going to read the story; I know how to read that story", and this is my first test in reading English." So I looked at the first line and I said to myself, "I can read this." So what did I read, I read, "Once upon a time" (she pronounces this as if reading Spanish) and that of course was, "Once upon a time." Sister laughed and I thought it was really something funny so I laughed too. We all laughed, but Sister could tell then that we were literate, we could read, we knew the value of the alphabet, so she didn't have to put us into the first grade to start reading.

AG But that book was in Spanish?

SI Oh no.

AG It was in English and you were translating in Spanish.

SI But you see that "Once upon a time" I could read phonetically in Spanish, "Once upon a time" (and again

she uses Spanish pronunciation), and Sister knew that I knew the sounds of the letters. I wasn't reading English, I was reading it in Spanish pronunciation.

AG Uh huh, I see.

SI The Sisters laugh when I tell them this story. But anyway, later on I was able to pronounce the title, and you know what the title was? It was Rumpelstiltskin. (laughter) No way could I ever _____ it. (laughter)

AG Most children couldn't. (laughter)

SI I mean in Spanish. You know, the combination of letters does not lend itself to Spanish at all. And talking about speaking English, I remember on the way up here on the train my father sitting with three of us who could read on the seats of the train and turned one seat around so that four of us were facing each other, my father and three of us, and he had in his hands a little dictionary and this dictionary evidently had common expressions and he had us sitting there teaching us common expressions in English. But he himself didn't speak English so he went by the pronunciation that was suggested in the book, and I still remember trying to pronounce "good morning" the

way my father pronounced it, "good afternoon", "good night", "please", "thank you", "hello." We were pronouncing them the way the sounds were in Spanish. But that was interesting because my father was anxious that we start learning as soon as possible.

AG Your father must have been an educated man.

SI He was self-educated because his father died when he was still very, very young and he had three brothers, there were four boys and he was the oldest, so he had to go out and help his mother so his education stopped at a very very early age. He told us that he stopped at the fourth grade, but of course in Mexico the equivalent of our age grades are six so the fourth grade would give him more education than the fourth grade here. However, he himself kept on his studying, he continued his studying on his own. And actually when we came here to the United States, within four years I remember he enrolled in a correspondence course in electricity in English. He had a little note that he created as a little study corner and he studied his electricity and passed. At home we never had to have anyone come to make any repairs. He was a cabinetmaker and carpenter, he had already learned plumbing, now he was an electrician, he could easily do welding. We never had anybody at home to do anything

whatsoever.

AG That's very fascinating.

SI Oh yes. He was great; he could do anything. And he was a great artist. I remember one day coming and saying, "Papa, I need a picture of a lion", or whatever it was that we needed, something in school. He said, "All right", and he took a large piece of paper and right away he gave me a picture of a lion. So he was an artist, too.

AG So, did he work here as a cabinetmaker?

SI When we got here, there was no position that he could get as a cabinetmaker, especially because he didn't speak English, so he got a job at a tinsmith shop, sheet metal working and there he continued and he was quite comfortable there for quite a while.

AG And did he learn to speak English in time and your mother?

SI Yes, slowly, much more slowly than we did because we had constant incentives. But he learned it with a definite Spanish accent. We didn't; we got it because

_____ we got without an accent.

AG And did your mother work on English at what she could get being at home?

SI It's interesting about my mother. She had so many children, she was always busy with us, so she would attend to whatever we needed although for shopping, or whatever she needed like going out for business, we would be the ones to help her out on that. Actually, we even went out with her shopping so that we could interpret for her. So she didn't need to speak English, we were helping her. In a way it was not too good because that way she didn't have to learn English. However, what happened one day was that my father noticed that we were, I suppose, speaking too much English in the house and my mother didn't understand. So I remember one day, while my mother was busy in the kitchen after dinner, he got the children all together around the dining room table and he said, "Look, you are coming home speaking English." That was about a year or a year and a half after we had been here. So he said, "You are coming home, you are speaking English but you know that your mother does not understand English and that is not too good. We have to respect your mother. She has to know what is going on in the house so from now on all of you

speak Spanish in the house and you can speak English anywhere else you like or when you're alone, but when your mother's in the house speak Spanish." And that was good for us because it perpetuated our Spanish. We did use it; we kept it up so that was excellent for us. Of course my mother did not learn English as such but she began understanding it. She did not speak English until later on when my brothers and sisters began to get married and she had to communicate with the in-laws. That's when she started although she could understand before that.

AG When you went to the Novitiate, did you go right after high school?

SI Yes, I went into the Novitiate and the Novitiate was then at that convent on Masonic Avenue and Turk where I had been in high school. In fact, the high school was small and we had classes downstairs and used one of the Sisters' study rooms as one of the classrooms; it was upstairs into the convent. That was interesting because we knew we were in the Sisters' area. We enjoyed that very much.

AG Now, was the Novitiate different than you expected? I suppose we don't know what to expect.

SI Well, I didn't know what to expect really because I had never had experience of living with Sisters. But what happened was that when we had been at St. Francis, I had gotten to know some of the Sisters very well especially after a certain experience. One day we were eating lunch in the schoolyard -- of course we lived only about a block and a half away from home, but it was fun for us to bring our lunch sometimes just to be with friends and play the whole noon hour, and I suppose it was respite for my mother, too. We never thought of that until later. But anyway, we were sitting eating with lunch with our friends on a bench that was close to one of the windows of the convent, and later on I found out it was the dining room. And as we were eating there, one of the Sisters began struggling with the window; it couldn't move, it neither went up or down. And I saw her struggling with the window trying to adjust it and she just couldn't, and I turned and I said, "Sister, my father can fix that window." She said, "Oh, he can?" I said, "Of course, he can do anything" (laughter). So I said, "I'll ask him to come on Saturday, if you like, and he can fix the window for you." And she said, "Oh, thank you, dear, very much." So sure enough I went home that afternoon and when my father got back from work I said, "Papa, would you come and fix the window for the Sisters?" And he said, "What happened?" I said, "Well,

Sister was struggling with the window when we were eating lunch and I told her that you could fix it." He said, "Sure, we'll go." So on Saturday he went and he fixed the window. All it needed was a new cord that broke and then from then on the Sisters would call my father because he had offered to be at their service whenever anything happened. So he would come whenever he was called for plumbing, for carpentry, for electricity, for anything so he was a frequent person there. And of course we went along with him, I mean either myself or Josephine and myself together. And sometimes, to keep us busy while my father was working at something, Sister Sterethia(sp?) who was then in the kitchen would fix us big, thick pieces of bread with butter and jam. That was so good (laughter). She really enjoyed doing that for us. In the meantime, we also offered to do something for her so once in a while she had us peeling apples or whatever, and that was fun. And of course we had to go with my father because he couldn't understand everything that they asked, any repairs, and one of us, or two of us, went with him so that we could interpret whatever it was.

AG You didn't mind at all (laughter).

SI Oh no, we enjoyed that immensely so we got to know the

Sisters pretty well. And then when I went to high school, I got to know Sisters there pretty well. And when I went into the Novitiate, my father again started coming to help in that convent whenever anything was needed because I told the Sisters there that my father was very handy. So they got to know him very well, and one day -- I remember this plainly -- one of the Sisters saw him, and he was very frequently there, and he was walking along the corridor with his tools. She said, "You know, Mr. Hernandez, all we need to do is give you a veil." (Laughter)

AG Did he understand?

SI Oh yes, he understood what it was so he laughed (chuckle).

AG Great. So you got your idea of generosity from your father early in life.

SI Oh yes, definitely, definitely yes.

AG How long was your novitiate? Was it two years?

SI First it was postulancy and that was six months and then a novitiate for two years.

AG And then they sent you out to teach or did they send you to school first?

SI No, oh during my novitiate -- postulant, darn it, the postulancy and the novitiate -- we took courses. So then when I made my vows _____ as a novitiate member as a novice, we wore white veils, and then after the pronouncement of vows it was a black veil. And during the time that we were newly professed, meaning after the vows, we were in temporary vows for three years and then not until after three years did we make permanent vows. And during that time I was in studies, but I started practicing teaching, it must have been a little bit before I was professed, a short time before I was professed.

AG Before final vows?

SI Before final vows. I went out and did practice teaching.

AG So your order started very early educating for teaching.

SI Oh yes, I started teaching in 1932.

AG And when did you enter the sisterhood?

SI I entered in 1930 and I started teaching, practice teaching that is, in 1932.

AG Did you go right to high school?

SI No. I started in the elementary school, in fact; it was a little school that we had on Edy Street called the Cathedral School in San Francisco, and there each of us had two grades -- it was a small school -- so I had first grade and second grade.

AG Sixty children? (chuckle)

SI No no. There were about 30 children.

AG Oh, that sounds great. Your order must have been very advanced because most orders that are not American did not educate their people except once they were teaching.

SI Oh no, we were in courses all the time.

AG So where were you sent to teach after your final profession?

SI My first school for formal teaching was St. Andrew's, San Francisco. That was in the avenues, Fourteenth Avenue in

the Sunset District, and there I taught two years -- no excuse me, three. I taught second grade one year, second grade the next year, and I went up with that class for third grade. I had that class for two grades so I enjoyed that very much. And then after that I taught at St. Francis, where I had come from. I taught at St. Francis and there I taught first grade. Then I taught at the Silesian School, that was the school which was attached to the Italian church, St. Peter & Paul's, in San Francisco, and I taught there for one year; it was a boys' school then. And after that I came to St. Mary's in Gilroy and I was there in Gilroy for....

AG Oh, a long way from home.

SI Yes. I was in Gilroy for a year and then I was sent to Los Angeles and I taught in Los Angeles, the _____ School of Our Lady of Lourdes. After Los Angeles I came back here and I taught at St. Patrick's.

AG In the elementary school?

SI The elementary school.

AG Here?

SI Here in what is now St. Patrick's Cathedral. I taught there for two years so I've been teaching here in San Jose, and after two years there I went to Albuquerque, New Mexico. I taught there for two years, then came back and taught at St. Christopher's here, St. Christopher's School in the West Side. I was there for three years; then I was asked to teach languages at Presentation High School in Berkeley. I taught there four years; then I was sent over here to teach at Presentation High in San Jose and I taught there for quite a long time -- 13 or 14 years, and I retired from there.

AG Like Albuquerque, I'm thinking, it was a great advantage to have someone that could speak English as well as Spanish. Do you have a lot of sisters that ....

SI Actually, we didn't have too many Spanish speaking children where I was at St. Charles School, but the movement to teach other languages was on in the educational system at that time so the sixth grade teacher, who was a gentleman, and I divided the grades between us at the request of the principal and the staff and we taught Spanish to the elementary school children. I taught Spanish to the first three grades and the eighth grade and he took care of the others in between. So we taught Spanish. I had been teaching languages even while

I was teaching elementary school because I taught sisters in training; they needed a language in their college work and I taught them both Spanish and Italian.

AG Oh, so you speak Italian as well.

SI You see, we had lived in San Francisco in an Italian area so I had it in my ear although I didn't speak it, we spoke English among us. But when it came time to learn another language by choice in college study, I chose Italian. Because I already had my Spanish, I didn't need any Spanish except literature courses which I took; history and literature courses in Spanish I took later in college, I didn't need any of the beginning. So I taught, or rather I learned, Italian and then later on I taught it. I have had a smattering of different languages; in high school, for instance, I took Latin which was then a four-year Latin course and I took three years of that, and I took two years of French, and then experimentally I took a year of German. So I enjoyed language that way, but I can't say I can speak French or German, I never had the opportunity, but Spanish and Italian ....

AG All the Romance Languages, they're called.

SI No, no, I cannot speak Portuguese -- quite different -- and I couldn't say that I could translate anything in French or Portuguese because I wouldn't be able to. I don't have that much of a prowess with it.

AG Do you have any Latin?

SI Oh yes, I have three years of Latin in high school.

AG I notice that you visited the Pope _____.

SI Oh yes.

AG I understand a lot of people were upset when he ignored that sister who asked for women to be able to do more things in the church. Did you react to that in any way?

SI No, I didn't react to that negatively because I knew how the Pope reacted to that kind of thing and I am not the liberal type so I didn't react too radically to that at all.

AG How did Vatican II affect you?

SI It liberated us quite a bit because it helped us go out of the convent and do work with people.

AG Oh, I see. You hadn't done that.

SI Well we did but in a limited way, but Vatican II really opened the field for us. We were able to go out and actually we changed or rather modified our habit so that it wouldn't be so cumbersome and hard to maintain. So we did modify our habit to a simpler one. Then, after that modification, which lasted about four years, then we changed to a suit. We had a choice of brown or blue or gray or black, and then after this suit we were able to use anything although for formal occasions we appeared in suits.

AG Do you find that you related better to people or did you find _____?

SI I found that we related better to people because they were not awed by the habit. Some people were awed; they didn't want to come near us because of the habit that seemed to be, for some people, forbidding. But now they readily come to us. It's easy to talk to us.

An interesting little episode about that. It's an interesting little episode that I remember way back when I was still in elementary school, in the eighth grade actually. We had the opportunity of coming here to the

Santa Clara Valley one summer and two of us -- Josie and I were the oldest of the family -- were able to get a job cutting apricots for preparing them to dry out in the field on crates. So we were able to earn some money. We called it "cutting cots" then.

AG Cutting ....?

SI Cutting cots, cutting apricots, getting them ready for drying. So we enjoyed being here in the Santa Clara Valley and actually we learned a great deal. We learned that, for instance, prunes have to be picked from the ground, not from the tree, and they're not processed until they drop so in picking the tree has to be shaken toward the end to get the fruit that is ready to be processed or dried to the ground. The sugar content then is complete. And I also learned that whole families would undertake the picking of an orchard so you'd see whole families, you know children and parents, under the trees picking up the prunes and filling the boxes. Then I also saw the work that the men did. They did the heavier work like picking peaches, those had to be picked off the tree, and pears and that kind of thing. So I did learn a great deal. For a while I think we were in Saratoga, what I remember, because I remember going to mass on a Sunday at Sacred Heart Church. It was in a

little church -- not the church that they have now -- a small church, a frame building. So that I remember quite well of the Santa Clara Valley. And I remember very very clearly buying, let's say, an ice cream cone for a nickel -- which we also did in San Francisco -- and buying candy bars for a nickel; sodas, which we did not call pop then, they were called "sodas", those were a nickel, too. So those days are long gone. And in regard to prices, in San Francisco we'd go to the playland at the beach and we could get a hot dog for a nickel and a hamburger for a quarter; so those were days past. I remember as a child, we would get a nickel on Sundays for our spending money and

(End of Side 1)

(Note: Side 1 ends in mid-sentence.)

Side 2

AG Were you allowed to spend the money that you earned? Did you bring it home or did you get a portion of it or how did that work?

SI No, from what I remember we gave it all to my mother. I don't remember ever spending any of the money that we got that way. In fact, I think that at that time hard times were coming on.

AG Thirties?

SI Yes, it was just before the depression and hard times were coming up and I think that my mother needed everything. My father was pretty marvelous; whenever he got his paycheck, he would come straight home and give the whole check to my mother. I remember that quite well, and then and there after she cashed it she would set aside money for him, for his transportation, his needs and then money for the family budget; I remember that so well, and I don't know how she did it but she managed very well with the money that came in. And then, during the depression years, that was the hardest of all. I remember that we did have hard times, but my father and mother managed.

AG But your father kept his job?

SI For a while no. He lost his job and he got odd jobs, different little jobs here and there and that was the hardest part of all. I don't remember too much about the difficulties because I think my father and mother had agreed that they wouldn't burden us with a lot of the financial troubles that they had. But when I look back, they must have had a hard time.

AG I would imagine. Now when the war came, did your brothers have to go for duty?

SI Oh yes. The first world war did not affect us because we were still in Mexico and in fact Mexico did not participate in anything of that nature because it was having its own troubles with the revolution. So we didn't have any experience of anything during the first world war. But during the second world war, yes, my brothers were affected. One of my brothers, Michael, was in the air corps, and another brother, Richard, was in the army; my oldest brother, Frank, worked with the Seebees, construction, and all of them came back. My brother Michael was awarded the Purple Heart so he must have been wounded -- he never talked about it, and he was in Asia for that war and he remembers what he called "going over the hump", which was the _____, and he remembers being in China, or rather tells us, being in China and in India. He was in that theater, China, and he said he never never wanted to go back to India because he suffered a great deal seeing the poverty there. He said he suffered very much just looking and seeing the poverty there in that country. My brother Richard did not go out of the country; peace was declared before he was sent out, he was in the training days in Arizona.

AG Now to get back to you specifically. Do you get direction from your order, did you, about where you would teach after Vatican II? You just stayed at Presentation evidently.

SI After Vatican II we were consulted; before that we just got our little direction to where we would be and what we would teach, but after Vatican II things changed somewhat and for the better of course. And before we were assigned to any work, we were consulted to find out if that were amenable and if we would feel comfortable with that type of work, whatever it was and wherever the place would be, so that helped a lot.

AG What they asked you seemed to be you would do your best where you felt comfortable.

SI That's right, but some of the sisters of course said, "Well, just send me wherever you wish; it's perfectly all right with me, anything is okay."

AG But you were already at Presentation, right?

SI Oh yes. I was in the high school, teaching high school. No, excuse me, when war was declared in 1941, I was still in Los Angeles. And I remember it was the day when our

school in Montebello outside of Los Angeles was being dedicated, and after the dedication we went back to the convent that we had near the school that was being dedicated and we were enjoying ourselves listening to music on the radio and having social hour and then, all of a sudden in the midst of the music, an announcer came on. The music was stopped abruptly and an announcer came on saying that the President of the United States was going to address the nation. All of us stopped, thinking of what was going to happen. And he came on and he told us about the attack on Pearl Harbor and that the United States was now at war. Of course that changed our whole order, everything else was _____. But I remember that quite well, I was still in Los Angeles teaching on that grade school.

AG Did that affect your life, did you have a little _____ in your school?

SI Well, it affected us in the way that we had to learn many things in regard to what we were to do in case of invasion. We had to teach children how to prepare for attacks and how to conduct themselves in case anything should happen if anyone would intercept them in any way, physically and so on.

AG So it wasn't a Japanese area, there weren't people shipped out somewhere?

SI Actually, and this is interesting, we had a marvelous janitor in our school; he was Japanese, just a beautiful person, and he had been here in the United States for quite a number of years. When that happened and the Japanese had to be sent to internment camps, he was sent to Japan because he was not a citizen.

AG Oh, heartbreaking.

SI Yes, it was. It was hard for us, too, because he was a great friend.

AG Did he have a family here?

SI He had a family in Japan, not here.

AG So did he ever come back?

SI No, he never came back, we never heard from him again.

AG So he could have been killed over there.

SI We don't know whatever happened to him.

AG That's so sad.

SI It was very sad because we really appreciated having him.

AG They're good workers.

SI Yes, he was a very good worker, very kind with the children, very good with the children.

AG Did you find the attitude in Los Angeles -- I found it, I was there at that time -- did you find the attitude of priests there that the Japanese were....now a lot of people felt they would take over, they wanted to take over the United States which we know today is ridiculous. But did you find people with that attitude or did you talk much about it?

SI No, not in our area. In fact, we were saddened because of the fact that some Japanese were so unjustly treated.

AG So you knew that at the time.

SI Oh yes. And of course later on we found out that many of the Japanese who were citizens were in the armed forces and were sent to Italy and they fought with the great army.

AG That was a sad epic in our history, wasn't it?

SI Yes.

AG Do you still have any connection with members in Mexico? Do you have any relatives there?

SI Oh yes, we have many relatives and many cousins. Our uncles and aunts they are all gone. We have first, second, third cousins, we have many relatives. And I had the happy occasion of going back to Mexico several times, and I also have an invitation from one of my sisters to go to Mexico this year so we will see relatives, we'll see first cousins most of all.

AG You fly of course.

SI We fly, oh yes. There's no other way now; it takes too long.

AG And is there an airport in Tepic?

SI There's a small airport there but we don't use that. What we do is we take the plane here in San Jose or San Francisco and fly to Guadalajara, and Guadalajara is in the state of Jalisco and the state of Nayarit is just

north of that. So what we do is we take the plane to Guadalajara and then the bus to Tepic.

AG So it isn't such a long....

SI No, it isn't far away.

AG Are people in Mexico now, those that you know, are they having any difficulty? There's so much trouble and they're so poor.

SI The big problem now is poverty. Many many are poor and the population is such that there are not enough jobs to go around and that's what creates the poverty. And the hard part is that many people from the rural areas think that there are jobs in the cities and they just swarm to the cities and there are no jobs there, especially the capital, Mexico City. They think that the big jobs are there because there's so much area, so many enterprises and they think that they're going to be employed and there's no funds there.

AG And they don't even have the peace of the country anymore. Do they go back to the rural areas?

SI Well, when they leave their rural areas that means that

they leave the agricultural area and that's hard because Mexico is very rich in agriculture, it's very fertile land, whatever is arable is very fertile land and if they leave the agricultural areas it means there'll be less people there but there is very little money in working in agriculture.

AG So they can't come back?

SI They do come back eventually if they feel that that's the only thing for them. Others don't because they keep on trying to get jobs in the city and that makes it very difficult.

AG And lastly, though, you probably will have more to tell when _____, but otherwise what kind of direction do you see personally, what direction do you see religious life going?

SI I think that the church is changing. Whereas Catholic schools were blossoming from years back and they were the seats of education for most _____ and now there are many schools closing and the prominent reason is because there are fewer religious to take over to keep up the schools and that is because there are fewer vocations to the religious life. And it's my estimate that there

are fewer vocations because the trend started way back during the second world war when President Kennedy started the Peace Corps, I meant after the world war. He started the Peace Corps and then also after that another movement started. What was it called?

AG Vista?

SI Vista. And then people felt that they could give of themselves both in the Peace Corps and in Vista without having to commit themselves for good.

AG Do you have like a third....

SI Third order?

AG Yes.

SI No, we don't have a third order but we do have an auxiliary. We have what we call, what is that....

AG A group of people who associate with you?

SI Yes, associates. We have associates and they could be men or women, and we have a good number and they share in the work that we do.

AG Do any of those ever become religious?

SI No, so far they haven't because most of them are people who are retired or no longer have to work or maybe their families have grown, they don't have any responsibilities for the family and they like to share in the work of the sisters.

AG Do you have couples in that?

SI So far we no couples, we have just either a husband or the wife or the widow or widower and we have two who are bedridden, one is bedridden one is in a wheelchair, but they still help us with their prayers and whatever they can do.

AG Now we find our associates growing at School Vianney and some of them can't come to us and we often have couples.

SI Oh that's great.

AG Now I wonder if you have something you'd like to talk about.

SI Oh let's see if I skipped anything. I think that's it.

AG So your order will survive. You don't think it will die out? Do you think religious orders will die out?

SI I don't think it will die out. I think it will take a different form, but I do think that the lay people have become strong and they have been empowered to do many many things that the sisters used to do so it helps the life of the church to get this surge, a second surge of helpers. In that way the church will survive in a different way; it's like a wave. Also, I have been hearing that in different countries there are many vocations for the religious life. I have been hearing that there are many vocations in Africa, many vocations in the Philippines and in other countries and they will be coming up so, in other words, they will probably be the missionaries of the future as _____ sent missionaries out so did _____ and the United States did too because of movements like Mary Knoll. They sent out many missionaries from here.

AG And I bet you did too, didn't you?

SI Oh yes, we have missions. We have had missions, we still have them, in Guatemala and in Mexico.

AG Do you have sisters in Africa and those places?

SI No. Our foundation, our _____ foundation, the California San Francisco group, we have not sent anybody out from here but Presentation sisters from other foundations have. We have Presentation sisters, our congregation, but based in other places besides San Francisco like places in New York, in the Dakotas, in Massachusetts, in Louisiana, in Arizona, in many different states and in England and Ireland. They have sent missionaries out throughout the whole world so we have Presentation sisters in many many countries.

AG In Africa?

SI Yes, in Australia, New Zealand, in India, we don't have any in Japan and China. We do have them in the Philippines, in South America and of course the United States. We have them in Newfoundland, in Canada so we are spread throughout the whole world.

AG Where were you founded? Were you founded in the United States or not?

SI No. Our foundation was in Ireland and our foundress is Honora Nego. We familiarly call her Nano, Nano Nego. Her tomb is in Ireland and some of the sisters have visited it, her burial place. She is very revered by all

of us. She founded the congregation in 1776; it dates from way back.

AG You don't know when you came to this country?

SI Oh yes. We came in 1854.

AG Right at the Civil War.

SI Before it.

AG Do you ever get together with the other foundations?

SI Oh yes. We ourselves in California get together very often, whenever we can, and we have little meetings, regional meetings. But all of the Presentation Sisters throughout the world meet through their representatives, either through the president of each group or a representative sent to the meeting. They have meetings at least twice a year.

AG But you don't ever, like this regional group wouldn't mix with the group from say Arizona?

SI No, not for work. We stay within our own foundation area for our work. We have not yet, let's say, united; we

SI Yes, we have groups who go out to do social work and missionary work in Mexico and in Guatemala. Of course that is from our foundation here in San Francisco. We have other missions which are dependent upon other foundations. We have Sisters of the Presentation all over the world but each one has some independent base and from those different bases go missionaries. But we have them all over the world as in Africa, in Australia, India, Pakistan, New Zealand, in the Philippines. We have missions in South America and we have convents in Newfoundland, Canada but so far we don't have any in Japan nor do we have any in China, of course, but we do have many many sisters all over the world. In Mexico we have a hospital, San Luis Poposi, and we have a convent with training of native girls in Guatemala. So those are very much alive and active.

AG In your travels, your own travels, did you go to any of your missions?

SI No, I have never been to any of our missions in Mexico although I have gone into Mexico to visit relatives. We have many relatives in Mexico, cousins now, our uncles and aunts are all gone, but we do visit cousins and we do travel around Mexico to see different parts that we have never been to before. The last time I was there, I went

don't have a union yet.

AG So you never were united that way. It was always where the group was founded in an area.

SI No, we were never united. We were in separate foundations, each one independent.

AG Oh, all right.

SI And each one was its own Novitiate for training, but of course the same constitution, the same rules.

AG And the same habits?

SI Same habit until the modified habit came in, then each one modified it in a different way and then after that, of course, everyone is out of the habit. Of course there are some sisters, older sisters, who prefer still to use the habit. That's up to them, their choice. We still have some sisters who use the modified habit and it's their choice, whatever they wish to wear it's perfectly all right.

AG Now, do you want to tell us a little bit about your missions?

with the family of one of my sisters and we went to the state of Juahaca; that's a beautiful state and very very varied in native culture, very historic, most interesting. But we do go to places like Guadalajara, Mexico City and different places that we want to enjoy geographically or historically. And when we do go to, let's say, Tepic to visit relatives there, we generally fly to Guadalajara and then take a bus from Guadalajara to Tepic, enjoyable, it's not too far away.

AG When you went to Europe, your sisters took you but did you choose the countries because of the language or because of relatives there?

SI We chose Spain and Italy simply because Spain was interesting to us because of our cultural background, speaking Spanish, and we wanted to tour Spain and to know more about the country; and of course Italy because of the fact that one of my sisters is married to an Italian and they have connections there; and of course the seat of the Catholic Church is Rome so we did want to go there. And that was very interesting to me because at that time when we went, the first time that is, to Europe it was Pope Paul VI and I was able to procure an audience with Pope Paul VI. The second time I went to Europe it was Pope John Paul and then we went to an audience with

him and that was interesting. But to go back to the first time, we toured Spain, we flew to Madrid and then from Madrid we took a bus tour through Portugal, beautiful country. We stayed in Lisbon for a while and toured from there. Then the bus took us to the south of Spain and all along the coast and up into Barcelona. That's a beautiful city, we stayed in Barcelona for a few days enjoying the activity there and the sites, then we came back to Madrid and flew from there to Rome and from Rome, which of course we stayed there -- not a great deal, but from Rome we went north, we didn't go south we preferred to go north into the cities that we found very very intriguing and interesting and very historical and with a great deal of art, like Florence and Venice, Milan and Assisi; we loved those cities to the north; then from the north of Italy we went into Switzerland, that's another beautiful country. We toured Switzerland and we stayed in Geneva for a few days, then back to Madrid and then to London and then from London we took the North Pole route back to San Francisco.

AG So you were there about a month?

SI About a month. The second time I went to Europe, it was a gift to me after my fiftieth year anniversary. So that one I took like a pilgrimage to the Holy Land first, but

the pilgrimage started -- it was a real pilgrimage, we had two chaplains -- we started at Cairo and toured Cairo and went to the museum, then went along the Nile and went to see the pyramids and got into the desert, then back to Cairo and up into Jordan. We stayed in Amman, Jordan, and then from Amman we went by bus to Israel and that was a very interesting thing to do because our driver, bus driver, couldn't come near Customs, he was not allowed to step within Israeli land at all so we had to take all our luggage and take it ourselves to the Customs area in Israel. The driver was not allowed to come near the Customs.

AG Was the driver an Arab or what was he?

SI No, he was Jordanian.

AG Jordanian ah hah. I was wondering if there was fighting while you were there.

SI Oh no, they didn't -- he was not allowed to come near the Israeli border. So we went into Customs there and that was the strictest Customs I have ever experienced in my life even to taking persons into a private room and all I had done to me was checking with a kind of a....

AG Yes, a detector.

SI A detector, yes. That's what they did, use a detector. I know that two of our group were taken and they had to be searched.

AG Was it because of their name?

SI I have no idea, but they had nothing -- they found nothing, nothing at all.

AG No, but I mean was there fear because they had names....

SI I really don't remember whether it was the name or looks of the person or the way they spoke; I don't know. But I've never been through such an extreme Customs search in my life. And we all had to wait our turn, we didn't put our luggage on the table ourselves; we had to put our luggage, including purses -- I've never seen that before -- on a cart and that cart was taken in by other persons behind the counter and we were called as each one's luggage came up and we were alone, you know, just one person at a time, not in line just going through and each person was gone over thoroughly, I mean luggage-wise. I remember my suitcase was turned -- it was a woman who took mine -- she turned everything up-side-down and

looked at everything. And I had a camera in my hand and everyone who had a camera was asked to take a picture.

AG To be sure that it was a camera. That was a smart idea.

SI To be sure it was not some kind of a bomb device or something. So I didn't know exactly what she was asking me. I never had had that experience before. She said, "Take a picture." I said, "Take a picture? Of what?" -- you know, the Customs. She said, "Take a picture of anything." So then I realized that she was asking me to activate the camera so I did, I took a picture of the ceiling, whatever, and that satisfied her.

AG Well that is smart. They don't have to take your camera apart that way.

SI Yes. Anyway, we left the Customs and immediately we went to Jerusalem, that was our base. We visited many places in Jerusalem; that was the real pilgrimage, Jerusalem, and we visited several of the churches there and historical places, then from....

AG Excuse me for just a minute. Was the priest your guide? Did you have a priest as your guide?

SI We had guides right there in Jerusalem hired by the tour company, the company that had made up the tour.

AG What I'm getting at is were they Christian guides or Jewish guides? There's a great difference in how they present it.

SI Yes, right. Those that we got, except in one place, were all Christians, but in one place we got a Jewish guide and that was in the Church of the Assumption but he was so well versed in both Christian views -- because he was a tour guide -- that it didn't make much difference, he gave us everything, the history and the point of view of a Christian although I realized later that he was not a Christian because I saw him with prayer beads and I asked him what kind of beads they were because they didn't look like a rosary.

AG Would that make him a Muslim, the prayer beads, because they're not used?

SI No, he was not a Muslim, he was a Jew. Well he may have been a Muslim now that I think of it; he may have been a Muslim. But he was thoroughly imbued with the Christian principles so he didn't in any way....

AG Give out misinformation.

SI No and he didn't say anything that would be strange to us. So we thoroughly enjoyed being there in Jerusalem.

AG Yes, you were fortunate. While you were going through Customs, was it kind of frightening?

SI It was not frightening exactly, that was not frightening. It was just irksome, to me it was irksome to be led through so many different unnecessary, I thought, searches but then, of course, one has to look at their point of view and realize that they were being very very careful. But to me it was so unnecessary at the time.

AG And when was this approximately?

SI Approximately 1954, no excuse me, not '54 I'm thinking of something else, '84.

AG Well, they had a lot of terrorist attacks so they get paranoid. That must be why they've done that. Did you notice that your bus driver, when I was there I noticed the bus driver checked under the bus every morning before we got in. He was convinced that there would be a bomb there or something.

SI No, no he didn't do that.

AG So you went from Jerusalem to....

SI No, interestingly our tour took us from Jerusalem, of course that was where we wanted to be more time than anything else -- in Jerusalem; that was our pilgrimage. But then, you see, we toured from Cairo to Jordan to Jerusalem, I mean to Israel, and then as part of the tour we took in Greece. We loved it; we went to Athens and then we toured some of the Islands and even went to....

AG Cyprus?

SI Cyprus? No we didn't go to Cyprus. I forget the name of the island nearby, but it was very very interesting, beautiful. And then from Greece we went back again to Italy and this time we went to the south; we were in Naples and part of our visit took us to the Isle of Capri (chuckle) and the Blue Grotto so that was interesting.

AG Did you go to Pompeii?

SI No, we didn't go any farther south, we didn't go to Pompeii at all; we didn't go to Sicily either. We went north again and went into Rome, that was my second visit

in Rome. And in Rome we stayed in a hotel just a block away from the Vatican so it was easy just to walk over to the Vatican.

AG Did you have time to walk around?

SI Oh yes, we were there for about a week.

AG Wonderful. How long was this trip?

SI This trip took three weeks.

AG But it was a tour?

SI It was a tour. A little over three weeks, I think it was about 24 days.

AG Did you go with your sister and her husband?

SI No no, I went by myself with a pilgrimage group, other Catholic people took part in it and we had two chaplains, one who was a formal chaplain and the other one was a tour member but he became part of the trip.

AG About how many did you have in your group?

SI We had about 20 people. When we were in Athens, when we visited the Acropolis and then later on walked around, we went to the places where St. Paul had preached, and then our chaplain celebrated mass for us right at the spot where it was thought that St. Paul had stood to preach. Just a wonderful experience.

AG Do you have pictures from that?

SI I have some but I don't know right now. I haven't taken them out for a long time.

AG You take them out and then we'd have to have a new audience to do that one (laughter). That's great so you got to Europe twice.

SI Twice yes. But now I have been invited by one of my sisters' family to visit some of our relatives in Mexico so we'll probably go this spring some time. We'll go to Guadalajara and then visit in our native state.

So here I am, retired, but doing other work. I work part-time at the San Jose Diocese, San Jose, and I work part-time at the Offices on _____ Avenue.

AG You work in the office did you say?

SI I work there part-time -- their offices, you know, many offices, and I work in the Office for Hispanic Ministry.

AG Oh. That's a big help.

SI Oh yes. I do translations there, both English and Spanish. I proofread, I do

(End of Tape 1 Side 2)

(Note: This tape ended in the middle of a sentence.)

Tape 2 Side 1

AG I'm Ann Gohl and I'm interviewing Sister Inez Hernandez about her days in Santa Clara Valley and this is Tape 2 Side 1.

AG Do you want to tell us a little more about your life here, Sister, when you were young?

SI Yes. First of all, my name is Sister Inez Hernandez. I'm a member of a religious congregation, The Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We have had schools here in the Valley for quite some time, beginning way back in the 1800's, St. Mary's School in Gilroy. I taught there one year, in 1939; it was a delightful year, it was countryside then. We had the old building, the

old convent, the old school and we went to the old church. They do not exist anymore. We have a new church, a new school, a new convent, but at that time it was a school much like a rural school and we had both boarders and day students. I had a combination first and second grade and it was a delightful experience because I was then a young teacher and it was quite a challenge to have two grades in one room and in a rural situation. By rural I mean country. It was an area then which is not at all as it is now. We were in the middle of a cow pasture and we had about half a block away the old cemetery which I loved to go to and wander around and read the tombstones and enjoy the history. The cow pasture was also quite intriguing because I had to steer away from the cows (chuckling) and from the ground squirrels which would pop up once in a while. However, the school situation was very challenging, as I said, because of the students' different abilities and different grade levels and quite a different routine at that time. I was there in 1939, the year of the exposition -- the extension of the exposition -- in San Francisco. I remember going to that exposition from Gilroy, the exposition that was on Treasure Island. So it was quite a while back.

Another school that I taught in in the Santa Clara Valley

was St. Patrick's in San Jose. I taught at St. Patrick's for three years and it was then a rather old school, it was not new by any means, but for me it was a new experience. It was a city but not a city like San Francisco as I had been accustomed to. It was then a city of much less, of 30,000 inhabitants, and we had some children coming in from the outside, from the farms, into St. Patrick's and the parish extended from the downtown area up into the foothills, the eastside foothills, and around Alum Rock Park.

AG What was it like teaching farm children? Was it different?

SI It was not different really but it was interesting insofar as they had a different outlook and they could bring in ideas that others in the city didn't have; for instance, their life around animals, their life in the farm, the duties they had, and so forth. It was quite intriguing and I remember at times one of the children's mothers would bring us, actually once in a while, some cream from their own cows so it was quite an interesting outlook. Then we also had, for our religious use, we had the old church. The new church now, St. Patrick's, was later used as a Cathedral, which is now the proto-cathedral meaning the first cathedral. We now have St.

Joseph's as the cathedral for the diocese. So my teaching years at St. Patrick's was also very interesting. There I had a first grade which I enjoyed very much. Incidentally, my experience in teaching has stretched all the way from kindergarten to college courses, which I think is quite different because of the fact that I had the gamut of all the grades on the way from kindergarten to past high school studies.

AG Which did you enjoy the most?

SI That question has been asked of me. I enjoy the first graders because they're so new and because at the end of the year in June it's almost miraculous what they have learned in one year from September to June where they came in not even knowing the alphabet, some of them because we didn't have a kindergarten experience for the majority at that time, to June when they could actually read and enjoy reading, many of them having read several library books along the way. And of course it was quite interesting and quite, oh I'd say, ego-boosting, you might say, to feel that one has done that much for children at that age. Then also we had at that time only eight grades, we didn't have double schools, so that was quite interesting; it was like a family. At the time we also didn't have the limitation of classes as we have

now; we can go only up to 35, let's say, but at that time I at St. Patrick's had 60 which I ....

AG Mmm! The first year!?

SI For the first grade.

AG (Exclamation!)

SI And I enjoyed every bit of it, <u>every</u> bit of it. I enjoyed it so much.

AG That's incredible.

SI But it seems as though it's impossible but it was not. It was a joy to me to do that and to me it wasn't any big job; I thought it was something to do and I met the need so I still enjoy looking back on it. In San Francisco where I began, at one point I had 76 but in the second grade; however, those were not unmanageable times for me because children expected to come in and appreciate discipline so it wasn't any wild bunch that we got. To me it was enjoyable to be among so many children and I was able to do it, according to results, because now I can look back and know some of my past students who are in professions that one wouldn't expect from children who

had been in, let's say, classes of 76.

AG Could they hear you, 76 children?

SI Oh yes, oh yes. Of course we had to double the desks, put them together instead of one-by-one, and those days were the days of desks on runners, it wasn't the type that one can move around. That was way back in the 1930's so it wasn't school where one had loose tables and chairs that one could move around into groups as we have now. The desks were on runners so we could just put the runners together and have two all the way down a row.

AG And did you have any groups?

SI Yes, oh definitely. We had reading groups and math groups, both.

AG So the children changed seats rather than the seats were changed?

SI They didn't change seats. I brought them up group by group.

AG Oh, you had chairs or something?

SI I had chairs for groupings and while one group was with me the others were working at something else.

AG Did you have any kind of aid?

SI No, no aids. That was another thing we didn't have, but they were so trained that they could work at something that was designated for them to do related to the work they had just done. So it wasn't too bad, it wasn't anything utterly impossible. I enjoyed it; those were the days when I was young and I didn't think that was anything too difficult (laughter) so it was all right. (More laughter) Now I wonder how I did it, but at that time it was quite an enjoyable deal. In fact, I've enjoyed every year that I have taught and of course each year was different, not one was the same, neither were the groups nor the grades the same.

I also have taught at St. Christopher's which is on the other side in the Willow Glen area. When I taught at St. Christopher's, I was one of the first to teach in the new school. The parish was founded in 1951 and there were eight grades in the school and the school was built before the church was built. That was something different. Usually the church is built and then the school, but this was the opposite, and the school began

with the first three grades, then a grade was added but the church held its Sunday services in the space that was to be eventually the seventh and eighth rooms. The wall had been taken away from between and the people would congregate in that like a hall and it was a good place to have mass. They all appreciated having the space because the parish had begun in an orchard and masses had been celebrated in a fruit barn at the beginning. And it began with Father John J. Healy, who was to become Monsignor John J. Healy, an honor that was given to him because of his work. And from the fruit barn he came into the double room, which was the seventh and eighth grade rooms of the school. Eventually when the first three grades went up and the third grade finished sixth grade, the new church was ready; it had been building and the new church was then ready to take the people in for Sunday masses and the hall was ready to be divided into the two grades, seventh and eighth grades. So the school was at the beginning when I first started there; I also was one of the first to live in the new convent which came later. When I taught there at the beginning, those of us who were the staff, the faculty, lived in Los Gatos at Presentation College in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and we would commute to St. Christopher's and on the way down we passed through areas which are now housing and commercial buildings and then it was all orchards,

orchards and places given to agriculture; now we see none of that existing anymore. However, at St. Christopher's we had a different type of child than we had in St. Patrick's because at St. Patrick's we had farm people as some of the families, and here in the Willow Glen area we had established city families. An interesting thing about that particular school was that Curtner Avenue, which now runs through all the way out through Meridian, was blocked right there at St. Christopher's which was on Booksin Avenue; it was closed because it was orchard. So Curtner Avenue at that time did not go through; it was a pear orchard. And the day came when the city broke through the orchard and Curtner Avenue continued all the way out west. Also another day came when the orchard across the street from the school, which was a beautiful pear orchard -- it had gorgeous pears and during the month of August one could see the pears hanging down the trees, huge pears like little lanterns which I enjoyed seeing from the window of my classroom -- but, as I said, the day came when equipment came and just touched the trees down, just threw them all down. And the reason for that was of course housing and the housing that was put there was Eichler Homes; we had no more orchard so that was a sad time for me because I enjoyed seeing the orchards across the street.

Another place where I have taught here in the Valley is of course Presentation High School. Before going to Presentation High School, I had taught at Presentation High School in Berkeley and from there I came over here and here at Presentation High School in San Jose I taught foreign languages. And that was another type of teaching I enjoyed; whereas I enjoyed the little ones in the elementary school, I enjoyed my subject in the high school. So it was one or the other and I really enjoyed the girls too; so it was another type of enjoyment.

AG How many students did you have there?

SI I had in each class, each beginning class, about 30. We were limited to about 30 in a foreign language, and I had of course a whole gamut. For foreign languages in Spanish, we had from the first year -- the language -- to the fourth year.

AG Now did you teach them to speak or was it basically reading in those days?

SI Oh no. It was learning to speak it first. It was developing into actual use of the language, not just a reading ability of whatever language it was. So it was quite an experience because I had been given a government

grant to study the new modern types of teaching foreign languages and had a second grant to go into Mexico to try it out.

AG So you didn't teach Castilian Spanish? You taught regular....

SI Well, Castilian Spanish is all Spanish; by Castilian Spanish some people take it to mean what we call "peninsular" Spanish, the Iberian Peninsula. But I taught Continental Spanish so the difference between Peninsular in Spain and Continental in the Americas -- it's all the same language, Castilian, but with a little difference in not only pronunciation but vocabulary also. The same parallel can be made with the English in England and the English in America, American English and English English, that type of thing. I enjoyed that there and even one year I had five levels, not only four, we had five levels because of the need for further....

AG Accelerated Spanish.

SI Yes, for some other students. But there also it was a new school. We had started a school in the late 1950s and I came in the early '60s from Presentation High in Berkeley so it was a new school when we had it. Now it's

quite well attended; it's not a new school by any means and it's quite well known, has become a well-known school for excellence. And I know even when I was there, judging by the teachers we had, it was an excellent school. And all of this experience was quite a great time for me because I have enjoyed being in the Santa Clara Valley and not only because of the teaching, also because of the contacts I made and the groups that I was able to get into because of my teaching area, like belonging to the Foreign Language Association of Santa Clara County, which was quite an experience for me and enjoyable of course.

We had, at the time that I taught in St. Patrick's, we had lived in another area, we had property in Saratoga and that property was destined -- had been bought really -- for a Novitiate and that property was 19 acres on Hill Avenue across the street from the Montalvo property and we had been planning to make a Novitiate there for our new sisters. However, even though some of us lived there -- four of us lived there taking care of the property -- we at the same time commuted back and forth teaching in San Jose, two of us lived there and went back and forth to St. Patrick's.

AG How far away is that?

SI Well, from Saratoga to downtown San Jose. I can't say how many miles it was but to get there we came along Saratoga-San Jose Road and turned into Stevens Creek Road to get to downtown San Jose. The interesting part about that, that I remember, is that there we have commercial buildings all the way down Stevens Creek Road it was then at that time pear orchards, cherry orchards and walnut orchards.

AG In the '50s.

SI In the '50s. And it was a marvelous thing to see them in blossom at different times and especially the pears, I guess. And right now where Courtesy Chevrolet let's say is located was a beautiful flourishing pear orchard. And at that time we didn't have all the shopping areas like Town and Country, there was nothing like that and the Valley Fair mall, so I was there when all that was pristine just agricultural area. We came down Stevens Creek Road to get to St. Patrick's and back and forth. We did not live in the convent; two of us who lived in Saratoga were not living in the convent which was a building, the convent that is, was a home that had belonged to the Leet family.

AG L-e-i-g-h like the street?

SI No, L double e t, Leet family, whose one daughter, Mrs. Auzerais, had given the home over to the sisters to use as a convent and the sisters commuted a few blocks from that home to the school next to the church. But eventually a new convent was built next to the school and the Leet family, I think eventually, in fact I know, it burned down and what is now there at the corner of Seventh Street and Reed are now apartments. But interestingly enough the beautiful antique tree, the old oak tree, that was then one of our treasures in our back garden is still there in the back of the apartments. So I still see it when I pass by there. However, I did not live there during the year, I only lived there maybe two or three summers to enjoy the home and to say that I did live in it at least for a short while.

But back to Saratoga, when the opportunity came to purchase a place up in the Los Gatos Mountains about two miles beyond Highway 17 up Bear Creek Road and beyond what was then the Jesuit Alma property, there was a school called Montezuma School for Boys. The property had been then abandoned by the school; it had been a school founded by a Dr. Rogers for boys and the area was just lying fallow and it was up for sale. However, some of the sisters who looked at it saw great possibilities so the Saratoga property was sold in favor of this other

property up in the mountains and we have it now and it is called Presentation Center. It served as our first novitiate here in the Valley and now it is Presentation Center and it serves a great many purposes for many groups who go up there for workshops, for retreats and for lectures and so on. So it has been a great experience. I lived up there in the mountains at first when I started teaching at St. Christopher's when we didn't have a convent and commuted back and forth, and Highway 17 was not as wide as it is now; however, we did enjoy driving down Bear Creek Road and along Lexington Reservoir shores and then into the city.

AG Did you drive in those days?

SI No, we had one sister who did the driving for us back and forth. And we did that about three years and then our new convent was built and I was one of the first to live in the new convent and that was on Booksin Avenue. So it was quite an experience and that's where I mentioned that we had been enjoying the orchards across the street from the school and now there are no more orchards, just Eichler Homes. It's been quite a change every year that I have been here in the Valley to see so many things that have become different from year to year.

AG When you were a child, did you work in the orchards?

SI Oh no. As a child, as I mentioned before, I lived in Mexico.

AG Yes, but I mean you were 12 when you came here, something like that?

SI No, I was almost 10.

AG Almost 10 so you're still a child in my view, so what did you do from like 10 to 15 or whatever?

SI You mean from the time we arrived here? Well first of all we came from a city in Mexico. We came from the city Tepic, which is the state capital of the State of Nayarit, and so I was accustomed to city or town life. I was never on a farm in Mexico, but when we came up here my father established us in San Francisco.

AG Oh, so that wasn't a farm either.

SI So I never had the experience of being a farm girl, so all my life I have been a city girl. However, I love all of nature so anything to do with nature like a farm is wonderful for me. So here in San Jose again I enjoyed

city life. My connection with farm life was through the students at St. Patrick's who, some of them, came from farms lying beyond the city area.

AG So you didn't do things like picking prunes or anything like that?

SI Oh yes. That happened one summer, one summer when I was in my teens. We came to the Valley here and many of the teenagers here in San Jose got jobs cutting apricots or picking prunes to be able to earn money for whatever they wanted, either for spending money, for their education, for books, whatever. So some of us had the opportunity of getting just seasonal jobs. I was here one summer when I got the opportunity of being part of a group that was cutting apricots, we called it "cutting cots"; so I had that experience and then for a while too I helped with a group picking prunes so I know those two jobs and I know what it entails. But I never had any experience with any other harvest. When I was in Gilroy, I did have the experience of having to wait until September for the opening of school because the schools there held back the opening day until the walnut harvest was over because families would get together and help with the harvest of walnuts and of course other fruits before that, like the apricots and the prunes. And the children would come to

school sometimes with their hands, their fingers, all black from having to shell the walnuts to take off the outer covering, so that was another little experience. I never had that experience of having to shell walnuts, rather having to take the husks off the walnuts, not shelling; so all that was intriguing to me, how things were done, things that a city child would not know about -- what went before they got the actual product or produce in the stores. To me that was a great education when I think back on it because I can understand many phases of this type of work better or I could understand it more than people who had never had this experience. So all of it was quite interesting to me.

Let's see, what else can I say about my experiences here. Oh yes, I live now at St. John Vianney Convent and I happened to start living there because when I started teaching at Presentation High School here in San Jose we lived in the convent attached to St. Christopher's sharing the housing, or the convent rather, that was destined for the St. Christopher's faculty. However, as the high school grew, of course our faculty grew too and there was no room for everyone in the convent, for both faculties; therefore, some of us had to find another place to live so five of us detached ourselves because we found that St. Claire's Convent at Santa Clara was free,

the second convent. The first convent, which was the large convent, had been turned over to the priests' rectory; the priests were using it for a rectory, the Jesuits were quite a number there for St. Claire's Church. So the sisters there had rented a duplex kitty-cornered to the original convent and now they had left it because they were going to reside some place else. So we heard about it and we had the opportunity of renting the duplex and it did beautifully for five of us; we each had a bedroom and we also had one room destined for a chapel besides one which was a living room. Our dining room was actually in the kitchen which was large enough for five of us. And while there I enjoyed going to the University for lectures and they even had the opportunity of teaching a class as a visiting lecturer, a class on methods of teaching foreign languages, so it was quite a wonderful experience for me. We were only about two blocks away from Santa Clara University on California Street so that was another marvelous experience. And another experience while there was being able to walk, actually walk, from the University of Santa Clara to the Valley Fair shopping mall; so that was another experience that was good for me. And let's see, what else can I say.

AG Was any of your family still living?

SI Yes. Altogether we were 10 children, I think I mentioned that before. One, as I said, died in infancy, a boy; nine of us reached maturity and of those nine, two have died but seven of us are still living. And all of them live in the Bay Area here, two as far up as Santa Rosa, which is sort of called the Bay Area because it extends way up there, but one lives Nevada, but all the rest of us are here of the immediate family, that is, but I have many relatives in Mexico still.

AG That's great, thank you very much.
This was taped at my apartment at 1655 South Winchester, which is Wesley Manor in Campbell, and Sister was here and this was March 16th on that afternoon when she recorded it. I think the first tape, that was just for this tape, the first one was done in her convent in one of the community rooms at St. Vianney Parish in San Jose or actually Alum Rock area. That was at an earlier date and I think that's mentioned on that tape.

Sister also said that around the area where she lived at the early part of coming to San Jose was an area that was occupied with, or surrounded with, dairies and she said most of the dairies were the Portuguese and we had already mentioned the fact that the Portuguese did a lot of dairying in Santa Clara. I think that's all we had

mentioned. Thank you.

End of Tape 2, recorded on Side 1 only.